



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on the Ukrainian Elections**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Paul W. Jones  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
October 28, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

For several months, the United States has been following closely the ongoing Ukrainian election campaign. We seek to assist Ukraine in becoming a secure, independent, democratic, and prosperous country that integrates with European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, respects human rights and the rule of law, maintains mutually beneficial relations with its neighbors, and helps strengthen international peace and security. Realization of this vision would be in the interests of Ukraine, the United States, and all of Europe.

In line with the numerous statements from other countries and groups of countries, the U.S. Government on numerous occasions during this period both publicly and privately has expressed concerns about the conduct of the presidential campaign. There have been numerous, well-publicized instances of behavior violating internationally accepted democratic norms, including disruption of opposition rallies, muzzling of independent media, misuse of "administrative resources," ransacking of pro-democracy NGO offices and employees' homes based on spurious charges, detention of pro-democracy supporters, and other serious violations that cast doubt on the Ukrainian government's will to uphold its democratic commitments.

Now, only days before the October 31 election, our concerns unfortunately are only increasing. ODIHR on October 22 released its latest interim report, which outlines a serious deterioration of the situation in recent weeks, including:

- Confirmed cases of involvement of the state administration in favor of one candidate and against another major candidate;
- Instability and uncertainty at Precinct Election Commissions due to a large number of commission members resigning or refusing to fulfill their duties;
- Continued failure by state-owned and allied media to provide impartial and fair coverage of or access to opposition candidates' campaigns; and
- Officially-backed impediments to the activities of opposition campaign activists and independent pro-democracy non-governmental organizations, such as police stopping of buses carrying opposition supporters to rallies and the recent detentions of civic activists on various politically motivated charges.

These observations of the OSCE ODIHR mission are very much in line with our own. In addition, we are increasingly concerned by reports strongly indicating that government forces

are behind numerous provocative and violent acts, such as the beating of peaceful protesters by Ministry of Interior employees the weekend of October 23-24.

At this juncture, we call upon the Government of Ukraine -- even at this late stage in the campaign -- to throw all its weight into ending violations of democratic norms. One of the most solemn responsibilities of any government is to allow its citizens to express their political will freely and in a fair manner. These principles are at the core of UN and OSCE commitments. In particular, we urge that observers, both domestic and international, be granted full access to the campaign and election-day processes. Most importantly, we urge the Government of Ukraine to ensure that election-day voting, vote tabulation and final registering of the results are conducted according to OSCE standards in a transparent and peaceful manner. The people of Ukraine deserve to have their voices heard, and we call on the Government to remove any impediment to that end.

We sincerely hope that the Government of Ukraine will hold democratic elections, so that relations between the United States and Ukraine can deepen and the pace of Ukraine's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions can accelerate. If the election fails to meet international standards, a variety of measures to hold officials responsible for electoral misconduct accountable will be considered, and bilateral relations and integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions will certainly suffer.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.